ORGANIC FARMERS ASSOCIATION

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Process & Procedure for Determining Policy Positions, Priorities, and Agenda

Annual Policy Platform Process:

1. OFA Policy Committee shall solicit opinions from all U.S. certified organic farmers and ask them to submit policy position proposals and prioritize policy issues annually. The Committee shall also solicit policy position proposals from OFA organizational members. A minimum of 30 days will be allocated for this process from the date of the initial request for proposals (RFP).
2. Once the results from U.S. certified organic farmers and organizational members have been submitted, OFA Policy Committee shall review the results, identify the top priorities, and draft policy statements making sure they are within compliance of OFA bylaws and agreements. The committee shall post these drafted policy statements to the membership for a ten-day comment period. The committee shall then review the comments and modify policy statements as needed over a ten-day period. These policy statements are then presented to the Governing Council for review, final editing, and vote for approval, requiring a 60% vote of the Council(within a ten-day period) before being submitted to OFA farmer members to vote. A minimum of 30 days will be allocated for the voting process.
3. At the end of the voting period, the Policy Committee shall tabulate the vote and analyze the voter data. For a position to become adopted as OFA policy, it must have 60% of the popular national vote *and* 60% popular support in at least two-thirds of the regions. The committee then presents the voting results to the Governing Council which will review for adherence to OFA Policy procedures, and if results meet these criteria, the policy shall be adopted. The adopted policies become part of the official OFA policy platform.

Urgent Policy Position Process:

Urgent policy issues may arise outside the annual policy development process. Any OFA farmer member or organizational member may propose an urgent issue for the Policy Committee to consider at any time. A supermajority (60%) of Policy Committee members is needed to determine whether an issue has urgent status. Only policy issues deemed urgent will be considered for review outside the annual policy review schedule. If the policy issue is deemed to be urgent, the following shall happen:

1. If OFA already has a policy position that deals with the urgent issue in the official Policy Platform, then the Governing Council may take appropriate action immediately.
2. If OFA does not have a policy position on the urgent issue, the Policy Committee shall decide whether the issue is consistent with OFA's mission, previous policy decisions, and/or is a good use of OFA's resources.
    a) If not, then Policy Committee recommends to the Governing Council that no action be taken.

b) If so, the Policy Committee shall research and create a draft policy position for consideration by the Governing Council.

3. Approval by three-fourths of the Governing Council is required to adopt an urgent policy position.

4. Any urgent policies approved by the Governing Council must be shared with the full membership and approved by OFA members as per the annual policy development process, described above, to be included in the OFA Policy Platform.

Processes for Letter Sign-Ons and Action Alerts

1. OFA Director has the authority to sign on to letters and respond to action alerts on behalf of OFA for all policy issues in the OFA policy platform.
2. Letters/statements that address policy issues in line with OFA mission, values and guiding principles but not included in the policy platform, must be approved for OFA sign-on by the Policy Committee Chair and Governing Council Executive Committee. If OFA Director is unavailable, the Policy Chair and/or Council President may sign on behalf of OFA.